

Chapter 5A

Transit-Oriented Development

(09.28.05 Public Review and Comment Draft)

INTENT

Transit-oriented development (TOD) is high-density, multi-family housing and mixed-use development designed to encourage accessible, active, pedestrian-oriented areas within walking distance of transit. The purpose of implementing TOD in San Jose is to reduce trips on freeways, expressways, major collectors and arterials while maintaining access for automobiles so that there are alternative routes for local trips by:

- Locating more housing near transit;
- Locating more neighborhood-serving retail and office uses near transit and housing; and
- Connecting streets and paths for pedestrians and cyclists to and through the TOD.

TOD is important in San Jose because it promotes:

- Active pedestrian environments;
- Transit ridership;
- Shared parking and lower parking-to-occupant ratios; and
- Intensification of existing and development of new neighborhood business districts.

In order for TOD development to be successful in San Jose, a strong relationship between development and transit and an understanding of how transit works in tandem with surrounding development is necessary. This understanding begins with: (1) defining locations and sites with land use designation where TOD should occur; (2) describing a conceptual framework in which existing and prospective development and transit can relate and complement each other; (3) understanding the challenges to implementing those concepts; (4) defining the components of TOD; and finally (5) describing how to complete a Planning Context Assessment. The Planning Context Assessment will function as the primary TOD design analysis tool to ensure all proposed development within designated areas implements the components and concepts of TOD and contributes to its realization.

Locations and Land Use Designations

Transit-oriented developments should occur in the following locations and sites with land use designations as defined by the General Plan:

- Greater Downtown Core and Frame Area (see map)*;
- Transit-Oriented Development Corridors;

- BART Station Area Nodes;
- Sites with the land use designation Transit Corridor Residential (20+ DU/AC), High Density Residential (25-50 DU/AC), or Transit Employment Residential (55+ DU/AC);
- Locations where a minimum density of at least 20 dwelling units per acre is intended.

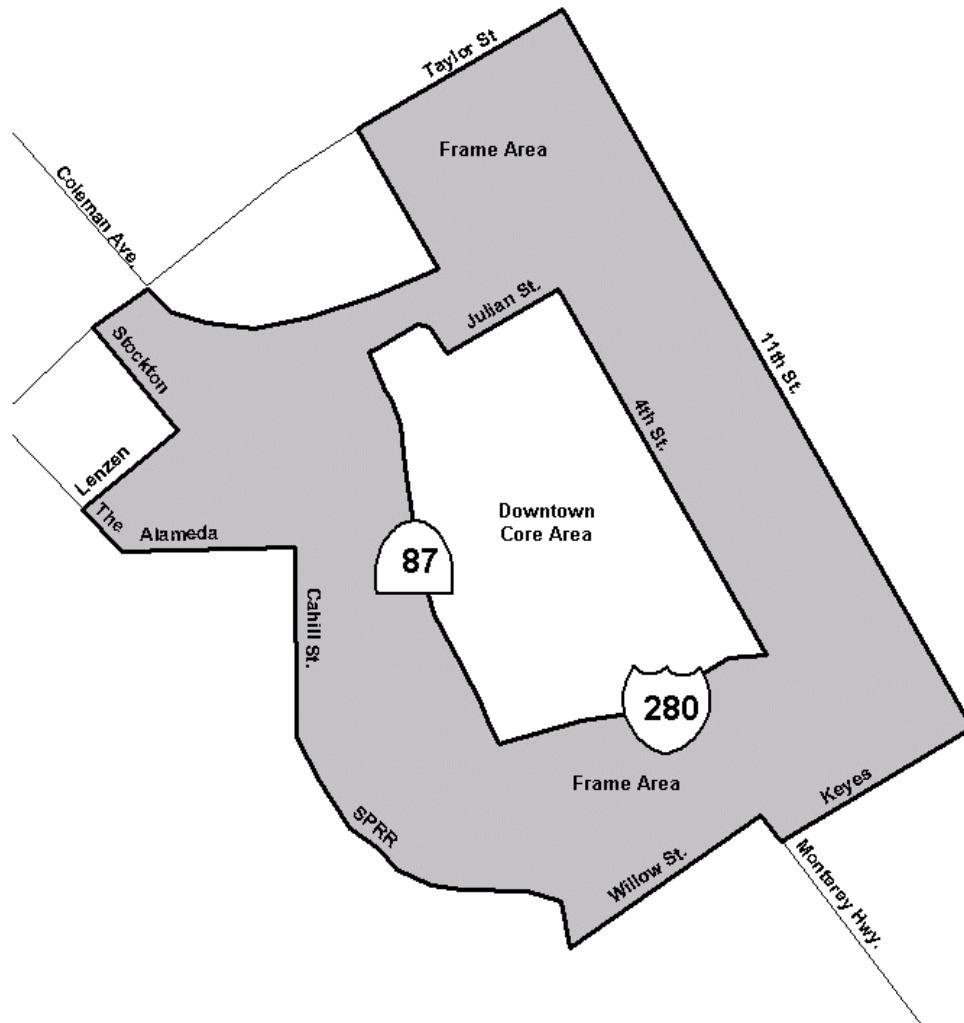


Figure 1. Map showing Greater Downtown Core and Frame Area

*Note: For all development in the Greater Downtown Core and Frame Area please refer to the following documents: Downtown Design Guidelines; Downtown Historic Commercial District Guidelines; Downtown Streetscape Master Plan; Green Building Guidelines; Downtown Lighting Master Plan; Downtown Parking Management Plan; Downtown Strategy 2000; Guadalupe River Park and Garden Urban Design Guidelines for Development Adjacent to the Guadalupe River; City of San Jose Five-Year

Implementation Plan 2005-2009; Strategic Development Plans as applicable; and Neighborhood Improvement Plan as applicable.

Transit-Oriented Development Concept

A TOD area:

- Is conceived as a whole community focused on transit and pedestrian circulation.
- Is organized around an identifiable center, where transportation, basic services and public gathering places are concentrated.
- Provides district-wide continuous pedestrian circulation, particularly to the district center and transit facilities.
- Includes complementary land uses appropriate for TOD such as neighborhood-serving commercial and office uses.
- Provides usable and accessible parks and public spaces, and avoids creating barriers or unnecessarily increasing walking distances between transit, services, and housing.
- Locates smaller parks and plazas near the TOD center while locating larger open spaces near the boundary as a transition to lower density residential areas or incompatible land uses.
- Provides appropriate transitions in land use, density and scale between new and existing development to protect privacy and security.

Challenges To Implementing TOD In San Jose

Understanding the challenges to implementing TOD in San Jose is important because perceptions, whether correct or incorrect, can influence the design of a specific development that may ultimately negatively affect the success of the TOD as a whole. TOD area circulation, for example, can be significantly impacted if a large site or critically located small site is developed leaving no flexibility for future dedicated pedestrian and bike paths or shared parking solutions. Following are common challenges to implementing TOD in San Jose:

- Perception that transit-oriented development will negatively affect the character of a neighborhood or depress property values;
- Perception that TOD entails higher risks and is difficult to finance;
- Perception that no market for TOD exists;
- The failure of existing land-use patterns and infrastructure to accommodate TOD;
- Negotiating challenges specific to building transit-oriented development on smaller urban infill and redevelopment sites;
- Difficulty implementing a complete and integrated network of dedicated pedestrian and bike paths.

Ideally, acknowledging these challenges early will lead to finding specific solutions that ensure new development in TOD areas is flexible as well as able to complements existing and future developments.

GUIDELINES

To ensure that a proposed development contributes to the realization of TOD concepts and to assist in overcoming the challenges of implementing TOD in San Jose list above, a Planning Context Assessment Map should be completed for each proposed development in a Node or Corridor.

Planning Context Assessment Map

The Planning Context Assessment Map should function as the primary TOD design analysis tool to evaluate specific proposed development in the broader context of a TOD area and its surrounding land uses. The purpose of the Assessment is to determine the degree of conformance with adopted City Council Policies, Ordinances, and Guidelines, and to the concepts described in this chapter. In particular, the Assessment will aid staff in assessing the potential for the subject project to incorporate non-residential uses and specific components of TOD list later in this section to satisfy the needs of the new transit-oriented development as well as existing and prospective development in the vicinity.

A Planning Context Assessment Map should be completed by the applicant/developer and provide the information list below at two scales: one showing the proposed development site in the existing context of the entire TOD area (within 2,000 feet of a light rail station, 3,000-foot radius of a planned future BART station, or within a Transit-Oriented Development Corridor) and one showing the proposed development site in the immediate context of adjacent parcels. Information from parcels outside of, but adjacent to the boundaries of the TOD areas should also be included in the Assessment. The Assessment should include the following:

- Existing circulation network (streets, sidewalks, pedestrian paths and bicycle paths, with stub-outs clearly indicated on adjacent parcels);
- Proposed circulation network for the development site in relationship to its immediate context and in connecting to existing and/or planned transit stops/stations;
- Footprint of proposed development;
- Current land use and density/intensity for developed sites;
- Adopted General plan designations for undeveloped sites;
- Both General Plan land use designations and zoning districts for sites immediately adjacent to the proposed development site;

- The location of any existing or planned Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail Transit stops;
- The location of any planned BART station;
- The content of adopted Strong Neighborhoods Initiative (SNI) documents, Specific Plan or Planned Development on and surrounding the proposed development site.

Components of Transit-Oriented Development

Every TOD area should be developed to encourage multiple ways to access existing and planned future transit stops or stations. This should include the introduction of alternative transportation options such as dedicated pedestrian and bike paths. Therefore, every site within a TOD area, regardless of size, should include and contribute to developing the following:

- Achieve **neighborhood compatibility** with surrounding uses and neighborhoods through **building massing and orientation**;
- **Mixed-use, high-density residential** buildings having minimal or no front setback;
- **Ground floor retail** or commercial office space adjacent to transit and located along principal pedestrian paths connecting housing to transit;
- For developments located within the Core Area or for developments that include mid- or high-rise residential development, less private open space should be balanced by more common and **public space** (parks, plaza's etc);
- Improved **pedestrian access** using smaller blocks, pedestrian paseos, multiple building entrances, and dedicated pedestrian and bike paths;
- Improved **streetscapes** including wider sidewalks (especially where ground floor retail/offices uses occur) and pedestrian scale street lighting and landscaping;
- **Parking**, including alternative parking solutions such as shared parking and lower parking-to-occupant ratios; and
- **Parking located** behind buildings coupled with on-street parallel parking.

The conceptual General Development Plan set should include explicit illustrations of these components beginning early in the planning process.

Neighborhood Compatibility

Overall, neighborhood compatibility with transit-oriented development should show the development to be well integrated with existing surrounding uses and neighborhoods, by providing amenities and services that serve the larger area, by creating appropriate scale transitions in building and orientation, and by avoiding traffic and parking intrusion.

More specifically:

- Where different housing types abut or face one another within a TOD node or corridor, the more stringent setbacks and building separations should apply.
- Buildings on the perimeter of new and existing development should mirror one another: back-to-back, side-to-side or, where a street or open space intervenes, face-to-face.
- Create interesting and varied building facades that reinforce street activity, visual interest and “eyes on the street”. Developers are encouraged to create changes in elevations and facade planes at intervals approximately every 30 feet.
- Introduce building setbacks above a height of 50 feet to maximize solar access to at least one side of the street for as much of the day as possible.
- Buildings along pedestrian routes are encouraged to have frontages with minimal or no setback.

Mixed-Use High Density Residential Development

Mixed-use residential development within a TOD area consists of a vertical or horizontal combination of commercial, civic, and/or recreational uses into a primarily residential building. Within TOD Corridors and Nodes, mixed-use development should be located along principal pedestrian routes between transit and housing and adjacent to transit stops and stations. A broad range of non-residential uses should be available to satisfy the day-to-day needs of nearby development. Larger transit-oriented developments can also contain employment land uses and commercial uses that draw from a larger area than the immediate transit-oriented development.

- Guidelines for various housing types and densities should be aggregated for the whole TOD node or corridor. In general, a minimum average density of 55 dwelling units per acre should be achieved for each TOD area with higher densities occurring closest to transit.
- For mixed-use residential development (25-40 DU/AC) also refer to Chapter 25.
- For mid-rise (40-90 DU/AC, 50-150 feet tall) and high-rise (90+ DU/AC, 150+ tall) residential development also refer to Chapter 26.

- Promote street-level uses that are attractive and visually interesting and generate activity.

Ground Floor Retail

- Retail should be located on the principal pedestrian routes between transit and housing and adjacent to transit stops and stations. Shops should surround the TOD center and line pedestrian routes without setbacks and with minimal breaks in the street wall. Principal entrances should face sidewalks. Parking, loading and trash should be located away from the pedestrian route, preferably with driveway openings off of alleys or side streets.



Figure 3. Pedestrian-Oriented Retail at Transit Stop: Retail and transit are mutually supportive and reinforcing. Bus and light rail serve this supermarket on South Second Street in downtown San Jose.

- Retail uses should include shops and restaurants that serve daily needs and generate high levels of pedestrian traffic. Less intense uses, such as professional offices, should be located off of the main pedestrian routes or in second-story space.
- Where the initial demand for retail is insufficient to occupy all the retail space provided, mixed-use buildings should be designed with sufficient ceiling heights and depths so that they can initially be occupied by housing, workshops or live-work space and later converted to retail. Such space should be at least 25 feet deep and preferably 40 feet deep with provisions for deliveries, trash and cooking exhaust. Finished floor elevations should match fronting sidewalk elevations. Finished ceilings should be at least 11 feet, while 15-foot ceilings will accommodate a mezzanine.

- Public and semi-public uses, such as libraries, post offices and day-care facilities, should be located in the district center near transit and fronting a public gathering space.

Private, Common and Public Spaces

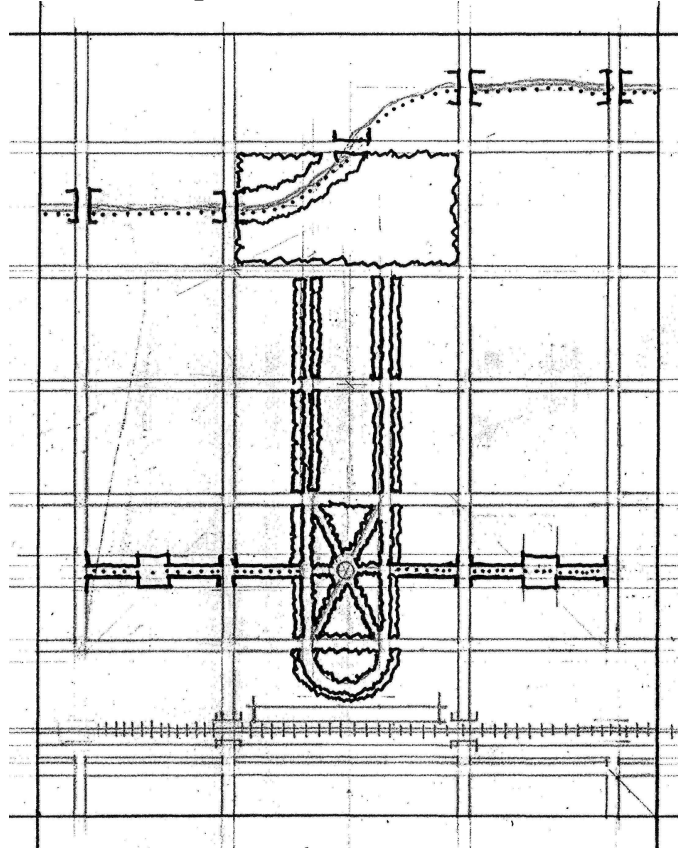


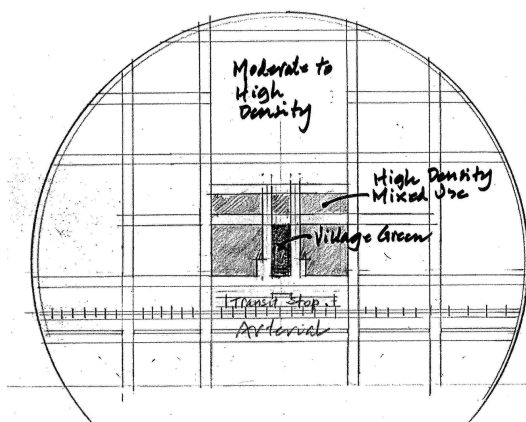
Figure 4. Open Space Hierarchy: Broad tree-shaded sidewalks link the TOD center and neighborhood parks. Paseos and creekside trails extend the open space system to adjacent neighborhoods and community parks. (Conceptual)

- Transit-oriented developments should include public gathering spaces that reinforce a sense of neighborhood and provide amenities to residents/employees. Such spaces should be centrally located near transit and on the principal pedestrian routes and should be designed for passive recreation and organized community activities.
- New transit-oriented developments should satisfy the requirements for common and private open space for the proposed housing type(s). Required setbacks and building separations should not be counted as common open space. Up to one half of the common open space required may be satisfied by dedicated public open space (other than riparian corridors or other environmentally sensitive open space) provided that the public open space has not been used to satisfy common open space requirements in other developments. Developers are strongly

encouraged to work with City departments, particularly the Planning Division and Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services in the planning and design of public open space. Please refer to the City Council approved Parkland Dedication Ordinance.

- Introduce a range of accessible (common private and/or public) open spaces (e.g., parks, plazas, courtyards, paseos) to provide amenity to the TOD, and to contribute to the network of pedestrian spaces leading to transit. Common open space should be centrally located at the point of maximum pedestrian circulation (generally towards the transit stop).
- Open spaces and pedestrian ways should be designed as a hierarchical system of public spaces (i.e., rather than residual spaces between buildings) with activities along their length that promote security, interest and comfort, include retail, recreation, seating and other amenities.
- More extensive common open space and school playing fields should be central to the development but located away from transit and the central retail area to avoid large breaks in pedestrian routes that might otherwise push housing beyond walking distance.
- Creeks, riparian habitat, existing vegetation and other environmental features should be incorporated as an integral part of the design of a transit-oriented development.
- In general promote less private and more public open space in a range of sizes and uses, particularly for developments located within the Core Area or for developments that include mid- or high-rise residential development.

Pedestrian Access and Streetscapes



Through building setbacks and public access easements (or street width reductions as permitted by the City of San Jose) existing sidewalks on fronting arterials should be widened, so that such sidewalks have a minimum dimension of 15 feet including the parkstrip instead of the typical 8-10 feet. This would allow flexibility in the design of sidewalk and parkstrip widths depending on the overall design of the node or corridor.

Figure 5. (Conceptual) Pedestrian access hierarchy.



Figure 6. Narrower sidewalks should leave room for street trees and planting beds to buffer pedestrians from traffic. Corners “bulb-outs” with planting calm traffic, improve sightlines, and shorten crosswalk distances, as in this photo of Santana Row.

- There should be no security fences or gates between areas of different housing types or between housing and non-residential uses except to protect the privacy and security of private open space.
- The circulation systems of new and existing development should be interconnected, so that residents of the existing development will have direct and safe access to transit and the amenities and services of the transit-oriented development node or corridor.
- New transit-oriented development should establish a pattern of development with streets and pedestrian linkages that provide clear, convenient, direct and safe linkages to transit.
- New transit-oriented development should establish a pattern of vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian circulation that links existing and proposed housing with existing planned commercial and community uses, and in so doing promotes a pedestrian/bicycle-friendly environment.
- Pedestrian and bicycle routes should radiate out from transit stops and transit-oriented centers. Where they follow streets, sidewalks should be broad with parkstrips and parallel parking to buffer pedestrians from traffic. Curb cuts for driveways should be minimized.
- Streets and pedestrian and bicycle routes should be laid out in an approximate

grid to permit direct connections within a development. Where cul-de-sacs cannot be avoided, pedestrian and bicycle paths are strongly encouraged to continue through to adjacent streets and developments.

- Streets and paths should connect directly to and through abutting developments to provide access to transit, shopping and other services and to provide alternate routes for local trips. Where the new transit-oriented development abuts vacant land or property expected to be redeveloped, streets and paths should stub out at the perimeter property to provide opportunities for future connections. Through-routes should be clearly public in character, with line-of-sight connections to neighborhoods beyond and without barriers, fences, gates or signs that imply that the route is for use of the development's residents only.
- Existing streets should be scaled to reduce the dominance of the automobile and to expand the usable pedestrian and bicycle environment. Employ traffic calming techniques, such as those in *Community Design & Transportation: A Manual of Best Practices for Integrating Transportation and Land Use* (Valley Transportation Authority 2003). Developers are strongly encouraged to work with City staff, especially the Planning and Public Works in the design and planning of streetscapes. For sites within the Downtown Core Area, please refer to the *Downtown Streetscape Master Plan*.
- Building setbacks and public access easements or street width reductions (as permitted by the City of San Jose) to existing sidewalks on fronting arterials should be widened, so that such sidewalks have a minimum dimension of 15 feet including the planting zone against the curb.
- Orient all commercial uses to the street with setbacks provided only to create a more comfortable pedestrian realm. In no case should ground level uses be greater than 25 feet from the curb, unless it is demonstrated that increased setbacks will contribute to a more active pedestrian environment (e.g. plazas, café zones, etc.).
- Create engaging residential street frontages with porches, stoops and building entries. Provide landscaped setbacks up to 10 or 15 feet in depth. Locate building and unit entries at intervals not to exceed 30 feet. Every unit with street-level space fronting a pedestrian street should have its own entry. The floor elevation of street-level units should be at least 18 inches and no more than 48 inches above grade.
- Utilize a grid street pattern of smaller blocks and incorporates bike lanes into the street or use paseos to create mid-block pedestrian paths when the introduction of a smaller grid street pattern for vehicles and pedestrians is not possible.

- Implement narrow streets with wider sidewalks and introduce street trees and pedestrian-scale streetlights. For additional guidance please refer to the San Jose Redevelopment Agency's Downtown Streetscape Master Plan.

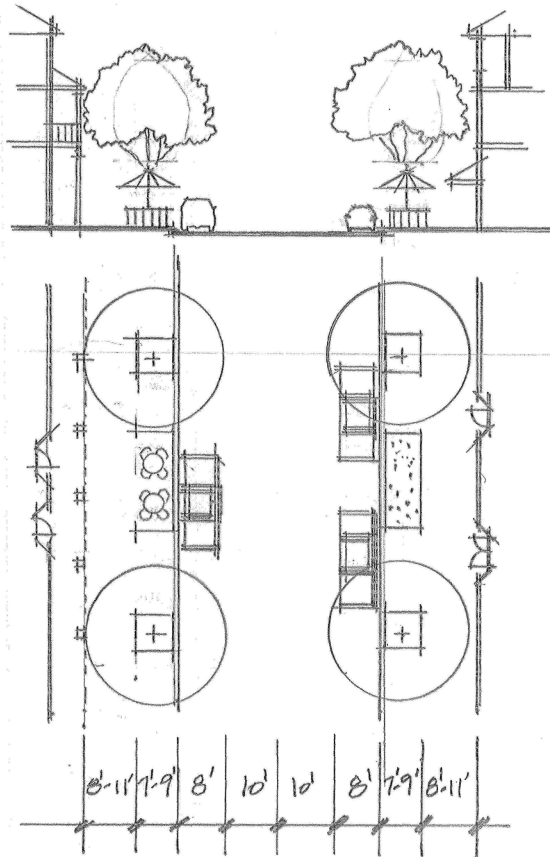


Figure 7. Mixed-Use Street: The curb-to-curb dimension should be the minimum necessary for parallel parking on both sides and fire access (typically 20 feet clear). Sidewalks should be 14 to 20 feet wide overall, leaving generous space for planting, cafes and street furniture.(Draft)

Parking

On-street parallel parking and parking behind buildings, particularly in TOD corridors along with shared parking arrangements promotes convenience for automobiles and complement the pedestrian character of the street front. At the same time, lower parking-to-occupant ratios encourage transit ridership.

- Refer to Chapter 8 of these guidelines to determine residential parking requirements.
- Employ reduced parking standards for mixed-use development, including joint use and shared parking among uses with staggered peaks.
- Transit-oriented districts should provide sufficient park-and-ride

facilities for commuters to avoid significant parking impacts on new and existing development. In most instances, this will require working with the Valley Transportation Authority to identify the need and

to locate facilities. Developers are encouraged to optimize parking by creating shared parking structures with other developments, VTA, and with existing businesses owners and resident in the TOD node or corridor.

Location of Parking

- All parking garages should be located behind fronting uses to minimize their impact on the pedestrian environment.
- Surface parking facilities should be located and configured to minimize disruption and discontinuity of the pedestrian system. Off-street parking and loading should

be accessed from secondary streets and alleys away from the principal pedestrian routes.

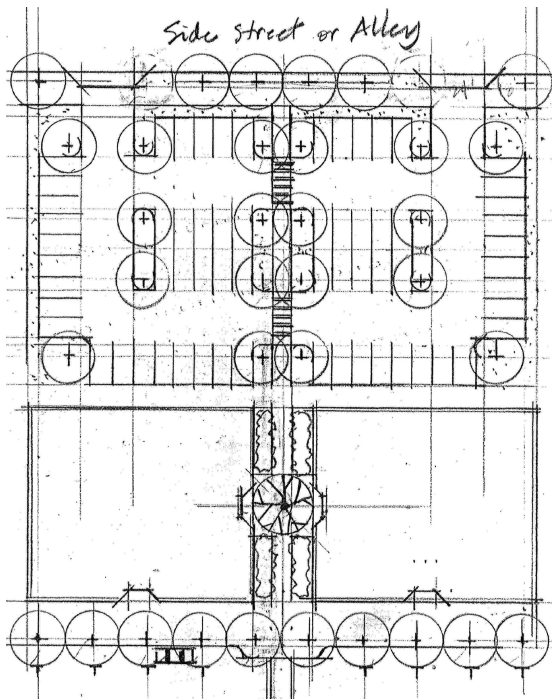


Figure 8. Parking at Rear with Paseo: To maintain a continuous active street frontage, parking should be located to the rear of buildings and be accessed from a side street or alley. Pedestrian paseos with active uses and attractive landscaping should link parking with the street frontage.

- Where surface parking is required, limit its frontage on major pedestrian-oriented streets. Provide a clear route, such as a mid-block paseo, between the street frontage and surface parking areas.
- Maximize on-street parking to promote convenience and to complement the pedestrian character of the street frontage. New streets should include parking on both or alternating sides of the street. In mixed-use projects, it is sometimes difficult to manage resident, guest and retail parking together; where feasible provide guest and retail parking on street.
- Encapsulate within the building interior and/or orient all parking facilities away from public streets and pedestrian corridors.



Figure 9. Parking at Rear with Paseo: To maintain a continuous active street frontage, parking should be located to the rear of buildings and be accessed from a side street or alley. Pedestrian paseos with active uses and attractive landscaping should link parking with the street frontage.



Figure 10. Paseo Connects Parking to Retail Street: Cafes and a flower stand enliven this intimate paseo serving parking behind shops on College Avenue in Berkeley.